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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ELA
ALSO FOR IO/ A A/S WARLICK
P FOR DRUSSELL AND RRANGASWAMY
USUN FOR WOLFF/GERMAIN/SCHEDLBAUER
DOD/OSD FOR FLOURNOY, KAHL, AND DALTON
NSC FOR SHAPIRO, MCDERMOTT

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: LEBANON: BORDER SECURITY PROGRESS REPORT

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of GOL officials and technical experts to guide
implementation and consult with donor countries on the
project's progress. Donors, including the EU, U.S., Denmark,
and Canada, believe that the involvement of and coordination
among all donors with GOL political and security officials is
a new organizational model for border security improvement.
(Note: Donors have agreed that the new effort will not give
Germany the lead, as it now has with the NBPP, in order to
avoid the managerial and structural problems that have
bedeviled the NBPP. End note.)

16. (C) The initial stage of the plan covers the first 70
kilometers of the northeaster border, with an implementation
period between April 2009 and June 2010. The LAF forecasted
the need for about 1200 personnel from the LAF, Internal
Security Forces, Customs, and General Security/Immigration in
the first stage with a total of about 3200 personnel to
control the entire eastern border from the northern Fisan
Valley to Shebba'. According to Zorrilla, the first stage
will have a rough estimate cost of about \$50 million. A
month-long terrain survey is scheduled (start date TBD) by
security agencies and the LAF to bring more clarity to the
current plan.

UNSCOL WILLIAMS PESSIMISTIC
ABOUT PROGRESS

17. (C) UNSCOL Michael Williams, Zorrilla's Chief of Mission,
told the Ambassador on April 23 that he believes progress on
the eastern border security plan was unlikely before
Lebanon's June 7 parliamentary election. Williams said that
during UN SYG Ban's January visit to Damascus, Syrian
President Bashar Asad said he was finishing border issues

with Jordan and then planned to tackle Syria's border issues with Iraq. The Lebanon border was not Syria's priority, Williams assessed. Prime Minister Siniora also expressed skepticism about Syria-Lebanon border security in his April 23 meeting with Williams. Although the Syrians had been helpful in cracking down on recent drug disputes in the Bekaa, Siniora suggested to Williams that the Syrians still maintained an open border policy.

COMMENT

17. (C) Past discussions on border matters indicated the issue was one PM Siniora had taken on personally. All observations indicate that whatever momentum the issue had gained since Siniora's meeting with international donors in October (reftel B) has dissipated. Nonetheless, UNSCOL and the donors intend to continue to promote enhanced border security and UNSCR 1701 with GOL interlocutors. End comment.

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